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SUBJECT: GORDAN JANDROKOVIC, CROATIA'S NEW FOREIGN MINISTER

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[1](#)1. (U) In a new Croatian government that consists largely of too familiar faces (reftels), perhaps the most important new face, certainly for U.S. engagement with Croatia, belongs to new Foreign Minister Gordan Jandrokovic. From 2004 to the present, Jandrokovic was chair of the Croatian parliament (Sabor) Foreign Affairs Committee, and as a member of Croatia's National Committee on NATO Membership. Prior to that he had served as chair of the Sabor Committee on Economy, Development and Reconstruction from his initial election to the Sabor in late 2003. During his Sabor term, he has been a frequent and good Embassy contact, and participated in a May 2004 International Visitor Program for newly-elected Sabor members.

[1](#)2. (U) Born in 1967, Jandrokovic started his professional career in 1989 in construction business, while still studying civil engineering (1986-1991). At the same time he pursued a degree in political science (1989-1993), whereupon he joined the Croatian Foreign Service. His area of expertise was the neighboring countries, central and eastern Europe. He has been a member of the ruling Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) party since 1992. He is currently a member of its national Presidency, as well as Chair of the party's chapter in Bjelovar-Bilogora County. From 1997 to 2000 he ran the office of then deputy foreign minister (now HDZ Prime Minister) Ivo Sanader. During the Racan government (2000-2003), when the HDZ was out of power at the national level, Jandrokovic left the Foreign Service to work as a manager in the private sector, in Zagreb and his native Bjelovar. Elected to the Sabor in 2003 as an HDZ representative, Jandrokovic ran unsuccessfully for Mayor of Bjelovar in 2005 against his local rival Djurdja Adlesic of the Croatian Social Liberal Party (HSLP), who has now become his coalition partner and one of four deputy prime ministers in the same cabinet.

[1](#)3. (U) Jandrokovic speaks good English, and his official bio says he has a passive knowledge of Italian. He is married and father of three children.

[1](#)4. (SBU) During the 2007 parliamentary elections, Jandrokovic was given a prominent role in the election campaign - the HDZ's generational answer to the emergence of his former diplomatic colleague and similarly youthful Zoran Milanovic as president of the opposition Social Democratic Party (SDP). He was tasked by Sanader to make some of the more personal attacks against Milanovic, and put in a solid performance as an effective campaigner, leading some media commentators to

characterize him in ways ranging from a Sanader "yes" man to the "rough young lion" of the HDZ. In Post's experience he is a close associate of Sanader, young, well-spoken, and ambitious yet affable. He has faithfully toed the party line as chair of parliament's foreign policy committee, and has been solid on issues like NATO, the EU, Kosovo and regional stability, but was not overly activist or one to stray far from his talking points. We expect him to maintain this profile as FM. In that sense, he does not represent a dramatic change from out-going FM Grabar-Kitarovic -- a foreign ministry protege of Sanader tasked to implement government priorities as FM.

15. (SBU) Like Grabar-Kitarovic, some officials such as President Mesic's diplomatic advisor Budimir Loncar, fear that Jandrokovic's relative youth and inexperience will limit his effectiveness both within the government and internationally. Our assessment is that his experience in domestic elective and party politics (something his predecessor did not have) may give him somewhat sharper elbows than she had for enforcing his will both within his ministry and in the cabinet. At the same time, he should still be able to present a similarly polished and dynamic, although just as youthful and bit more brash, image of Croatia to the outside world.

BRADTKE